

Musings...

By John Cutler

I like the Roman Catholic bishop who said, "A smile is the shortest distance between

two persons." And remember that you are not fully dressed until you wear a smile. A frown? Why, a frown is a smile turned inside out.



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The founding fathers (where were the founding mothers?) were so wrapped up in the cause of freedom and liberty they forgot to treat the Indians as equals.

I understand the sign in a post office: "No dogs allowed." But the fine print baffles me; "Except Seeing-Eye Dogs." Neither the seeing-eye dog or its master can read the fine print, no?

An aphorism is considered a half truth. Why do most people believe the wrong half?

This week's household hint for lazy housewives: Leave your vacuum cleaner around in plain sight. Then if friends drop in, see your dirty house, they will think you are in the middle of cleaning.

Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson said it: "I believe that if we introduced the Lord's Prayer, senators would propose a large number of amendments to it." Edward Everett Hale, when chaplin of the senate, was asked if he prayed for the senators. "No, I look at the senators and pray for the Country."

If a diplomat says yes, he means maybe. If he says maybe he means no. If he says no, he's no diplomat. And surely Cyrus Vance would agree with Mark Twain: "A diplomat is an honest man sent abroad to lie for his country."

A Gaelic proverb: "If the best man's sins were written on his forehead it would make him pull his hat over his eyes."

Ildi Amin, who has killed all his friends, is now working on his acquaintances.



Perry Como Missed The Bus

By Lois Martin

High school bus trips today must be a far cry from what they were 25 years ago. And it's all because of musical trends.

If you remember, bus trips to and from sports encounters were passed merrily with group singing. You'd pick out a good seat, toward rear middle, so as not to miss anything from up front but far enough back so chaperoning adults would miss you. The absolute rear of the bus was left for those whose behavior was lacking in total propriety, unless their plans went awry.

Anyway, we'd pass the trip with lively songs. There were always a few good singers to make up for the rest of us and to handle harmonizing.

Gosh it was wonderful. We had "Now Is The Hour...When we must say goodbye." That was a tear jerker, sung mournfully on the way home after a basketball game was lost. More sprightly renditions were offered on "Side by Side"..."Oh we ain't got a barrel of money; maybe we're ragged and funny; but we're travelin' along, singin' our song, side by side."

And we hadn't grown out of "You are my sunshine," always good for your super sopranos. We believed we were raising the devil when we sang "100 Bottles of Beer on the Shelf," right down to the last fading bottle. And if you had a cooperative bus load, you could sing rounds: "Sweetly sings the donkey at the break of day; if you do not feed him, he will surely say, hee, haw, hee haw, hee haw, hee haw, hee hay."

A few from the back of the bus would start on the more bawdy minstrel lyrics of well-known smutty verses, only to be hushed by the personnel in the front or the ever patient bus driver himself.

Nowadays the kids must be at a loss for good bus songs. How can they hum on the melody when there isn't any? Or do they simply pound out the beats. And they still need words, don't they? Who can understand them to memorize them. Who are the Bings and Perrys that furnish pleasant bus trips for today's sports.

Oh, I can sing along with Ann Murray on "You Needed Me." And Englebert never opens his mouth that I don't join him. Same with Simon and/or Garfunkel, Barbara and Olivia.

Even the B.G.'s have earned my musical respect. True, I've never been able to catch all the words to "Too Much Heaven," but the melody is easy to take. But I'm concerned about Mrs. Gibb, their mother. How would it feel to raise four bearded sopranos?

I've been told the above listed songsters are not the top recording artists with today's youths. They skip the soft stuff, I hear, and go directly to medium or hard rock.

They speak of a person named Pink Floyd, a title that makes the sex of the singer indiscernible, could even be a Ms. Then there's that Rolling Stone crowd, a group of flower children that wilted. And there's the Punk Rock element that the School Committee shouldn't allow on bus trips. Anyway, I can't help but question the music of any organization that concludes a performance by smashing their instruments. But then I'm old-fashioned. I would tend to save the same old guitar year in and year out. High schoolers of today have every right to get discouraged. If I had to listen to that music I'd be depressed. What do they sing on the way home after a winning ball game?

Take Billy Joel, for example. If I understand correctly, he's categorized as between soft and medium rock. Billy looks like a nice enough boy on his album cover. He's got a pair of boxing gloves hanging around his neck. Some high school students tell me they can relate to him.

I don't know if that's because of his songs or his gloves.

One of his renditions is called "She's Always A Woman." Its strains include "She can kill with a smile; she can wound with her eyes." The kids tell me Billy Joel wasn't referring to his mother.

I came right out and asked this generation of teeny boppers if they understood all the words of the harder type songs. They conceded they don't, but that doesn't stop them from singing them. Apparently where real words fail to come to mind, they add their own, becoming song-writers as well as singers. And of course, pupil/guitar ratio has risen enormously. More kids may have guitars than braces.

But I'm heartened. They guaranteed me they're still singing on bus trips. They have implied I wouldn't like all the songs but at least one song has survived the generations. They still sing "100 Bottles of Beer on the Shelf," with their own adaptations, of course.

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